

1. A method of removing particulate matter from a drilling fluid to reduce or eliminate the plugging of a sand control screen, comprising the step of passing the drilling fluid through a shale shaker screen formed of the same type of screen material used to form the sand control screen.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the shale shaker screen comprises a stainless steel selected from the group consisting of 316L, Alloy 20, and Hastolloy.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein the shale shaker screen comprises at least one screen layer having an aspect ratio of approximately 2:1.
4. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of pumping the drilling fluid downhole.
5. The method of claim 4 wherein the step of pumping the drilling fluid downhole occurs prior to the step of passing the drilling fluid through the shale shaker screen.
6. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of passing the drilling fluid through the shale shaker screen occurs after drilling is finished and before the sand control screen is placed downhole.
7. The method of claim 1 wherein the drilling fluid comprises a drilling mud or a drill-in fluid.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein the shale shaker screen comprises three screen layers stacked one on top of the other, and each screen layer has a different pore size.
9. The method of claim 8 wherein the screen layer having the smallest pore size is placed at the top of the stack and the screen layer having the largest pore size is placed at the bottom of the stack.
10. The method of claim 9 wherein the top screen layer has a pore size of approximately 75 microns, the middle screen layer has a pore size of approximately 150 microns, and the bottom screen layer has a pore size of approximately 850 microns.

11. An apparatus for removing particulate matter from a drilling fluid to reduce or eliminate the plugging of a sand control screen, comprising a shale shaker screen formed of the same type of screen material used to form the sand control screen.
12. The apparatus of claim 11 wherein the shale shaker screen comprises three screen layers stacked one on top of the other, and each screen layer has a different pore size.
13. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the screen layer having the smallest pore size is placed at the top of the stack and the screen layer having the largest pore size is placed at the bottom of the stack.
14. The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the top screen layer has a pore size of approximately 75 microns, the middle screen layer has a pore size of approximately 150 microns, and the bottom screen layer has a pore size of approximately 850 microns.
15. The apparatus of claim 11 wherein the shale shaker screen comprises a stainless steel selected from the group consisting of 316L, Alloy 20, and Hastolloy.
16. The apparatus of claim 11 wherein the shale shaker screen comprises at least one screen layer having an aspect ratio of approximately 2:1.
17. The apparatus of claim 11 wherein the shale shaker screen comprises two to five screen layers ranging in pore size from approximately 40 microns to approximately 850 microns.

18. A system for removing particulate matter from a drilling fluid to reduce or eliminate the plugging of a sand control screen, comprising:

    a pump to pump the drilling fluid into a wellbore and recirculate the drilling fluid to the surface; and

    a shale shaker comprising a vibrating screen formed of the same type of screen material used to form the sand control screen, wherein the particulate matter is filtered from the drilling fluid by passing the drilling fluid through the vibrating screen.

19. The system of claim 18 wherein the vibrating screen comprises three screen layers stacked one on top of the other, and each screen layer has a different pore size.

20. The system of claim 19 wherein the screen layer having the smallest pore size is placed at the top of the stack and the screen layer having the largest pore size is placed at the bottom of the stack.

21. The system of claim 20 wherein the top screen layer has a pore size of approximately 75 microns, the middle screen layer has a pore size of approximately 150 microns, and the bottom screen layer has a pore size of approximately 850 microns.

22. The system of claim 18 wherein the vibrating screen comprises two to five screen layers ranging in pore size from approximately 40 microns to approximately 850 microns.

23. The system of claim 18 wherein the vibrating screen comprises a stainless steel selected from the group consisting of 316L, Alloy 20, and Hastolloy.
24. The system of claim 18 wherein the vibrating screen comprises at least one screen layer having an aspect ratio of approximately 2:1.